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THOUGHTS  
ON THE QUESTION

WHETHER NORMAL SEMINARIES OUGHT TO BE DISTINCT  
ESTABLISHMENTS, OR INGRAFTED ON COLLEGES?

BEING

AN INAUGURAL ADDRESS

AT HIS INAUGURATION AS PROFESSOR OF ANCIENT LANGUAGES, IN  
LAFAYETTE COLLEGE, EASTON, PA., JANUARY 1, 1838.

BY ROBERT CUNNINGHAM, A. M.


Late of the Edinburgh Institution for Languages, Mathematics, &c.

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## INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

TWO QUESTIONS of infinite importance to the future destinies of the human race are in course of solution in this land of civil and religious liberty;—how far man is capable of self government; and how far Christianity is independent of legal provision for its support. Believing that the satisfactory solution of both these great questions will essentially depend on the enlightenment of the people by means of common schools; that in Pennsylvania, at least, the existing Colleges may, by a slight modification of their arrangements, be rendered the most efficacious instruments for furnishing teachers to common schools, and thus supplying the great desideratum for their improvement; and that the Institution within whose walls we are now assembled possesses peculiar advantages for this end; I trust that it will not be deemed too great a deviation from the ordinary course of procedure, on occasions such as the present, if I confine myself in this discourse to the statement and illustration of these positions.

That the permanency of the Institutions of America depends essentially on the enlightenment of the people, is a truth admitted by all reflecting men. In regard to her political privileges this truth is self-evident. The permanency of these must depend on the manner in which the elective franchise is exercised, and the various offices of the State discharged by those who are called to fill them. But how shall men, whose minds are darkened by ignorance, judge of the pretensions of rival candidates, how shall they discriminate between the patriot and the selfish and ambitious partizan, or arrive at a just decision on the complicated questions of policy, by a reference to which their choice is to be regulated? Must not the election of a representative by such a people be a matter of chance, or rather is not the probability greater for their making a wrong, than a right choice? In regard to the sub-

ordinate offices of the State, it is equally important that the whole people should be educated. It is the boast of this country, that the laws govern but to secure; ~~that~~ this shall be the case, not only must men be specially educated to administer the laws, but the people must be trained to reverence and obey them. Despotie governments may with impunity neglect their duty in this respect, because they can restrain by physical force the outbreakings of the evil passions which are fostered by ignorance. But free governments have no such resource; their only safety lies in enlightening their citizens in the knowledge of their duty, and convincing them that their interest, as individuals, is identified with that of the State. So true is the observation of that distinguished statesman, William Penn. "That which makes a good constitution must keep it: viz. men of wisdom and virtue, and these are qualities that, because they descend not with worldly inheritance, must be carefully propagated by the virtuous education of youth." To the same effect the illustrious Washington, in his Farewell Address, after stating the connexion between the happiness of a nation and its virtue, and the dependence of morality on religion, proceeds as follows: "Promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. 'In proportion as the structure of a Government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.'"

The friend of liberty and of order then must, if consistent, be the friend of education. By a happy necessity these are inseparably linked together. And the despot has not a more direct interest in prolonging the reign of ignorance, and shutting out from his dominions the light of truth, than the citizen of a free republic has in reflecting and concentrating that light; but if the friends of civil liberty throughout the world look with intense interest to the experiment now making in America, how far the utmost degree of liberty is compatible with order; the friends of religious truth look with no less interest to the experiment making, how far the maintenance and extension of the Gospel may be entrusted to the voluntary efforts of a Christian people. The experiment is not, indeed, a new one. During the purest ages of her history, the Christian



Church existed apart from the civil government, an object of persecution, not of favour and protection. And the subsequent history of the Church certainly furnishes no argument for the union of Church and State effected under Constantine. Still, in perilling the cause of God on the energies of a Christian people, in abandoning the fortresses which human policy had erected, as bulwarks of the truth, and descending to a level with their antagonists, resisting all advantage, save the goodness of their cause, the friends of religion in America have indirectly pledged themselves to ceaseless exertion in its behalf. Their confidence ultimately rests, indeed, on the promise of God, and on the power of his truth on the minds of those by whom it is embraced, still it is their duty to avail themselves of every lawful means for promoting the cause in which they are engaged. And of these means none is more directly efficient than the moral and religious instruction of youth. On this the friends of religion must depend, not only for maintaining a succession of learned and pious men to act as office-bearers in the Church, but, under God, for the perpetuity of the Church itself. The schools are the nursery of the Church. In them the minds of youth receive those impressions which they are to bear through life. And although the direct teaching of religion belongs more peculiarly to the parents and the religious instructor, yet, if their efforts are not supported by the schoolmaster—if, on the contrary, a counteracting influence is exerted by him—it is not difficult to anticipate the result. Superstition or infidelity will usurp the place of pure religion, the hopes of Christians throughout the world will be cruelly blighted, and that land to which they look as one of the most powerful instruments for evangelizing the Heathen, and whose missionaries have already been so honourably distinguished in this cause, abandoned itself to spiritual darkness, shall require that aid which it now so liberally imparts.

The Christian, then, equally as the patriot, has a deep interest in the advancement of popular education. It is indeed one of the glorious distinctions of pure Christianity that it has ever exerted an influence favourable to this cause. Pagan antiquity produced philosophers, men of high intellect and profound research, but they confined their doctrines to the

aristocracy, and made no effort to enlighten the great mass of the people. Corrupt Christianity, from a different motive, discountenanced every such effort, rightly judging popular ignorance essential to its own ascendancy. But in the earlier ages of the Church, to the poor the gospel was preached; to the ignorant Jew, and the despised Gentile, equally as to the learned Rabbi and the proud Philosopher, the soul elevating truths of Christianity were proclaimed. And, at the era of the Reformation, the same hands that had rent asunder the veil which popery had drawn around the precious truths of the gospel, planted every where the school and the college. The fathers of the Reformation understood well the intimate connexion which subsists between education and the maintenance of religious truth; and to their enlightened efforts, under God, we are indebted for the preservation of both. On the necessity of popular instruction, then, all are agreed; but in regard to the best means of promoting this end various opinions are entertained.

We remark then, that in order to have good common schools we must have good teachers, and, in order to have good teachers, we must have individuals specially educated for the purpose. The first of these positions is self evident. It may indeed be regarded as an axiom in education, as is the teacher, so is the school. In proof of the second, we refer with pleasure to the able report of the superintendent of common schools of Pennsylvania for 1836, in which it is expressly stated "that the chief defect of the Pennsylvania system is undoubtedly the want of good teachers," and the chief remedy "the establishment of institutions for the proper education of common school teachers." In what description of schools then are these teachers to be educated? In seminaries specially devoted to this purpose, as in Prussia and France? To this there are various objections. First, The number of such seminaries which would be required, is so great that the funds available for educational purposes are altogether inadequate to their establishment and support. The number of teachers employed in the common schools of the state of Pennsylvania, inclusive of the city of Philadelphia, during the year 1836, was 2428 males, and 966 females. Supposing the aver-

age period during which they serve to be fifteen years, the number of teachers required annually for the schools would be between two and three hundred, and as the system extends, the number would be proportionably increased. Taking three years as the period of training, and it does not seem possible to accomplish the object in less, the number in these seminaries at one time would be nearly one thousand. To educate this number, at least ten seminaries must be built and maintained at an annual expense, including board, of not less than one hundred thousand dollars. If to save expense, two great seminaries only should be erected, one in the east, and another in the west of the State, as has been proposed, not only would the travelling expenses of the students be thereby greatly increased, but their number would be such as to preclude the possibility of training them to the art of teaching in the attached model schools. Prussia had twenty-three Normal seminaries, France seventy-six, at the period of my visiting the schools of these countries. In none, so far as I recollect, did the number of students much exceed one hundred, in the great majority it fell below that number. Second, The educating of teachers apart from the rest of the community, in schools under the direction of the government, appears to be a system better adapted to a monarchy than a republic. The power, which, as public functionaries, these teachers are afterwards to exert on the public mind renders it desirable that their opinions on political subjects should be formed in schools frequented by other citizens, and so constituted as to preclude even the suspicion of imparting any political bias. The difficulty of establishing in Normal Seminaries any form of religious instruction agreeably to all the different denominations of professing Christians, would present another difficulty peculiar to this country, and might eventually lead to the omission of such instruction, and consequently to the entire frustration of the purpose for which such schools are intended.

Influenced probably by these and similar motives, the legislature of the state of New York, instead of introducing the Prussian system, have established one of their own. They have voted a sum annually to one academy in each of the



eight Senatorial districts, on condition of the trustees of the academy annexing to it a department for the instruction of teachers. According to the last annual report of the regents of the University to the Senate, it appears that one hundred and eight individuals were in the course of preparation for teachers; but, First, This preparation is lamentably defective, consisting merely in the future teachers being instructed in the ordinary branches of education, along with the other pupils of the academy, without any attempt to train them to the art of communicating what they have learned. Even for the limited object now stated, the employment of academies is objectionable. The pupils attending such establishments are in general mere boys, and the system of teaching is of course adapted to the capacities of the majority of the pupils. How unsuitable must such a course of instruction be to young men educating as teachers, and requiring a comprehensive and thorough knowledge of every subject to which their attention is directed? The great objection, however, is the absence of the peculiar feature of teachers seminaries, viz. the means of training the pupil to the art of governing a school and communicating knowledge. In the Normal seminaries of Prussia and France, the first year is indeed spent in revising their previous acquirements, and obtaining clear views of the branch which they are afterwards to teach; but the second and third year are devoted principally to the art of teaching the theory, being communicated by lectures and examinations, and the practice by daily exercises in teaching under the eye of the director, in the model schools attached to the seminary. Second, In the New York system, no precaution is taken to secure the services of the individuals educated as teachers. It would be interesting to know what number of the one hundred and eight reported as under preparation in 1836, have since become teachers. Judging from the experience of one of the academies at which I had an opportunity of making inquiries, I should be inclined to think that the proportion was small.

Instead then of erecting special seminaries for the education of teachers, or ingrafting teachers departments on academies, the respected president of Lafayette College, in a



communication to the chairman of the Education Committee of Pennsylvania, several years ago, suggested the having recourse for this purpose to the existing colleges. The more I have reflected on this plan, the more I am convinced that it is at once the most economical, the most efficient, and in every way the least objectionable method of attaining the end in view. The founders of the parochial system of Scotland, unquestionably the earliest attempt to provide the means of national education, and certainly one of the most efficient, distinctly recognize the connexion between the colleges and the common schools. They expressly declare, that in appointments to the parochial schools a preference shall be given to graduates of the four Universities, and in point of fact, a considerable number of the parish schools of Scotland, have been taught by men thus educated. The colleges of New England, in like manner, have furnished a considerable number of teachers, not only to the States in which they are situated, but to other portions of the union. We are aware that the supply of teachers thus furnished is precarious, and that in a country where the demand for talent in every department is so great, and the rewards of industry so certain, the number of educated men who continue teachers is comparatively limited ; but this is a difficulty with which we have to contend, whatever plan is adopted for educating teachers. The same education, which fits a man for discharging aright the highly responsible office of a teacher of youth must fit him for other employments, at present more lucrative and less laborious. The remedy for this is not to educate the teacher imperfectly, so as to disqualify him for other pursuits, nor to cramp his powers by a partial development, that we may retain his services, not to limit the instruction given in Normal schools to the mere routine of a school room, the classification of pupils, and the method of teaching by question and answer, or on the mere mechanical forms of any system. This would be to defeat our own aim, to perpetuate the very evils which we deplore, to fill the schools with teachers half informed themselves, and incapable of communicating what they have never thoroughly learned. The remedy is to raise the salary of the teacher, to render the office one which liberally educated men will con-

tentedly occupy, and with this view to prepare such men by a regular course of education at the public expense; bonds being taken that they will either serve the public in the capacity of teachers for a fixed number of years, or refund the expense of their education. Let the citizens of this great republic once see duly qualified men, devoting themselves to this branch of the public service, labouring assiduously in preparing their children for the duties of life, and the same liberality which rewards the services of the clergyman, the physician, and the lawyer, will be extended towards this not less important, and equally laborious profession. The causes of the low estimate in which teachers are at present held, and their inadequate remuneration, are evidently the erroneous impressions entertained as to the importance of their office; the term education being restricted to the teaching of reading, writing, and arithmetic, and that imperfectly; the low standard of attainment required in teachers, the consequent facility with which unqualified persons press into the office, the increased competition and consequent cheapening of labour thus produced, and the transference of the contempt entertained for individual teachers to the employment itself. Let any other of the learned professions, the medical, for example, be opened to all. Let it be understood that no preparatory training is necessary, no expenditure of capital on the part of the candidate, no diploma, as a guarantee to the public that the individual possesses the requisite fitness, and what would be the result? Why that a host of quacks would rush forward, each vaunting his own nostrum, and the regular practitioner being fairly driven from the field, the profession itself would sink into contempt. Is it that we value the bodies of our children more than their minds, that we require a diploma in the medical adviser and dispense with it in the teacher. Or is it a remnant of the barbarous feudal system, when the people being trodden under foot, any one was deemed qualified to dole out to them the pittance of information which their masters considered it fitting that they should possess. To whatever cause the evil is to be ascribed, the degradation of teachers is an evil, and one which must be remedied. The magnitude of the interests entrusted to their care demands this. The per-

manency of our institutions, the perpetuity of religion itself, is involved in the manner in which they discharge their duty. The people require only to know this to will the means; they love economy, but they cheerfully remunerate other public functionaries, and their unwillingness to contribute to the support of teachers, arises from mistaken apprehensions as to the nature of the duties entrusted to them, and the qualifications required for their performance. The teacher then must be educated. In common with the members of the other learned professions; the powers of his intellect must be developed by strenuous exercise, and his memory stored with useful information. Mind being not only the instrument with which he is to operate, but the material on which his labour is to be expended, the philosophy of mind must specially engage his attention, and subsidiary to this, the study of civil history and political economy. The sciences which describe and explain the phenomena of the material world, natural history and natural philosophy, and the science of mathematics, valuable as a mental discipline, not less valuable from its application, must be carefully studied. The philosophy of language also, and the general principles of grammar must claim a share of his attention, and to all this must be added a critical knowledge of the English, and in some districts, of the German language; such a knowledge as will enable the individual not only to speak and write these languages grammatically, but to impart the same power to others. The foundation being thus laid broad and deep, the edifice must be raised, with a special reference to the uses for which it is intended. Pedagogics, or the theory and practice of education, in the enlarged acceptation of the term, must become his special study. Under the eye of an experienced teacher, acquainted with the system pursued in the Normal Seminaries of Europe, but with sagacity enough to discriminate between the essentials and non-essentials of the system, and with sufficient knowledge of the people of this country to accommodate to their circumstances what is borrowed from abroad, he must engage in the actual business of teaching in a model school, furnished with the necessary apparatus, and conducted on the most approved principles. On completing this course, and giving



proof not only of his attainments in literature and science, but of his possessing the requisite fitness for imparting his knowledge to others, like the members of the other learned professions he should receive a diploma guaranteeing the fact; which diploma should be entitled to respectful consideration in any application which he may afterwards make for employment. Whether the candidate for the office of teacher shall follow out the course of education now suggested in seminaries, specially devoted to the purpose, or in colleges, having a model school attached to them, is, so far as concerns the information given, a question of minor importance; a question merely as to names, for such seminaries, if properly conducted, would in reality be colleges. We have already stated some reasons against the erection of separate seminaries for the education of teachers, which reasons may be regarded as arguments for employing the existing colleges for that purpose. Academies being as we have seen objectionable, and no other project, so far as we have heard, having been proposed for attaining the end, we remark further in support of this view :

Frist, That the state of Pennsylvania has already expended two hundred and forty thousand dollars on colleges, and that eight of these colleges are now in operation, furnished with the requisite professors for instructing the future teachers in general knowledge ; and requiring only the addition of a professorship of education, the annexing to each college a model school, and the loaning to each of the young men who enter as students, fifty or sixty dollars annually to aid in defraying their expenses ; bonds being taken, that, at the termination of this period of study, they shall either serve the State three years as common school teachers, or refund the money expended on their education. Second, That the faculty of the colleges constitute a board of examination for conferring diplomas on teachers, to which, if deemed expedient, the clergy of the vicinity, the judges or other legal functionaries, and the school directors of the district might be added. Third, That while such an apparatus could be created without great expense, and while the employment of it avoids the difficulties on political and religious grounds to which we have already shown the erection of special seminaries



is liable, and while it leaves both to candidates for the offices of teachers and school directors a choice of persons and places, so as that they may select the professors whose tenets they most approve, and the colleges most convenient to their residence ; it does seem that the diverting of the funds, destined to educational purposes into new channels, and the raising up a number of additional establishments, would exert an injurious influence on colleges already perhaps unnecessarily multiplied, and thus impair rather than promote the general interests of education. Fourth, While the erecting of special seminaries for the educating of common school teachers, would separate still farther the education of the people from that of the wealthier classes, and create jealousies fatal to the best interests of the republic ; the educating of those teachers in colleges would form a connecting link between the different parts of the educational system, and blend those parts into one harmonious whole. In the monarchies of Europe there is policy perhaps in separating the education of the people from that of the privileged classes, that the information imparted to the former may be suited to their circumstances ; but in a free republic the policy is directly the reverse. The political equality of all the citizens being recognized, not only must their right to obtain for themselves equal mental cultivation be conceded, a concession nominally enjoyed even under despotisms, but the educational establishments must be so constituted, that, to a certain stage of progress, the whole citizens shall be educated together, and that every facility shall be afforded to indigent talent for sharing in the advantages of seminaries devoted to the higher branches of literature and science. The claim of the individual to share in the advantages of these seminaries, is founded on justice, because they are in part at least supported at the public expense ; and the expediency of recognizing this claim is no less evident, it being obviously the interest of the State, that no talent which God hath conferred on any of its citizens should remain uncultivated. Fifth, The educating of common school teachers in colleges, by associating them with those who are afterwards to occupy more prominent positions in society, would lead to the formation of friendships, tending not only to promote their

respectability and happiness, but directly to increase their professional usefulness. In the language of our President, in the communication to which I have already referred, "the project before us links the extremes together. The school teacher goes forth from the midst of a large circle of acquaintances a professional man, he carries with him into the labours of his most important avocations all the kindly feelings, and cherishes the pleasant recollections of his college friends. His former associates settle around him, in the other learned professions, their friendships are kept up, their intimacies lead them to occasional visits. The lawyer, the physician, the clergyman, call upon their professional friend in school, inquire into his success, views, and prospects; at his request examine the school, and make such remarks upon the performance as may have the best effect. Thus the very pupils conceive a strong feeling of interest in the friend of their teacher, and all the stimulating result of a public examination is the result of a friendly call."

Colleges then have a direct bearing on the cause of popular education, inasmuch as they are best adapted to furnish teachers to the common schools. The fact of their reservoir of learning being considerably elevated above the level of those whose wants they are to supply, forms no valid objection to their use. The stream can never rise higher than the fountain head. In the nature of things it must fall considerably below it. The people of this country are entitled to the best education, it is the interest of all that they should receive it; but how is this possible, if their teachers are to come from common schools or academies, and six months drilling in a Normal Seminary is to be all their preparation for the important duties to which they are called. But if colleges have a direct influence on schools, these last have a reflex influence of not less importance on colleges. To the schools, the colleges must look for a supply of students. If the information conveyed in the schools be meagre and defective instead of exciting a thirst for further knowledge, they quench without satisfying the desire already existing; if, in the strong language of a modern writer on education, they prove slaughter-houses of intellect, the colleges must necessarily suffer. To

what cause are we to ascribe it that Scotland furnishes a greater number of university students in proportion to the population than any country in the world, but to the wise provision made by the founders of the Scottish system for connecting the colleges with the common schools, and for securing to these last, thoroughly educated teachers? And to what cause are we to ascribe the languid condition of the colleges in Pennsylvania, but to the absence of such provision, and the degraded circumstances of common schools. The number of the colleges has been assigned, as a reason to account for this, but the reason is unsatisfactory. Distributed over the State, so as to bring the advantages of a collegiate education near to the agricultural classes, from whom chiefly the students of the country are to be drawn, and stimulating each other to exertion by a generous rivalry; the number of the colleges should have had a favourable rather than an unfavourable influence in their success. The true cause is to be found in the low state of the common schools, in the want of preparatory information on the part of those who should avail themselves of colleges, and their consequent disinclination to follow higher studies. If then, as we hope to show, colleges exert indirectly a powerful influence on the cause of popular education, our argument for the employment of colleges as seminaries for training teachers, will receive additional confirmation.

We remark, then, that besides the direct influence which colleges exert on popular education, by furnishing teachers to the common schools, they exert, indirectly, a powerful influence in the enlightenment of the public mind. Common schools, even when best conducted, furnish only the keys of knowledge. They are important, indeed, in this respect, because individuals are thereby enabled to unlock for themselves the treasures of wisdom stored up in books, and by reading and reflexion to develop the powers of the mind, and accumulate information; but, independently of books, conversation with the more highly educated classes, discussion on questions of religion or politics, the Christian ministry, the periodical press, contribute powerfully to the diffusion of intelligence among the people. Now all of these means owe their



efficiency to colleges or seminaries of a higher order than common schools. Without such seminaries no highly educated class could exist in this community ; those scientific truths which in one age studied in colleges, become in the next, through the medium of conversation, the property of the people, would cease to be thus transmitted to them ; not only would the progress of discovery be arrested, but the very history of past discoveries would speedily be forgotten ; the learned professions abandoned to mere sciolists in literature and science, would sink into contempt ; and the periodical press, an echo of the public voice, a mirror which reflects and transmits the light borrowed from other sources, but originates none, would either be extinguished, or the feeble rays which it reflected would serve only to render visible the surrounding darkness. Luminaries might arise, as they did in Europe, during the middle ages, but shining on a globe which had no atmosphere to reflect their rays, they would enlighten one small portion of its surface merely, and that only for a short time. To be convinced how much more the intelligence of a people depends on the indirect influences to which I have referred, than on the common schools, you have only to look around you. Whence do the people of this Commonwealth derive their information ? Not surely from the common schools. And yet mingle with them in the haunts of business, accompany them to their farms or their manufactories, converse with them on the topics of the day, or the processes of their arts, or even on general questions of religion and morals, and you will soon be convinced that there is no deficiency of intelligence, no want of acuteness, that notwithstanding the defects of their early education, they are, generally speaking, an intelligent and a well informed people. Now what does this prove ? Not surely that book learning is unnecessary, and attendance on schools a mere waste of time, but that in a country having through the instrumentality of colleges, a well educated class, between which and the other classes of society, the most perfect freedom of intercourse exists ; enjoying also the weekly ministrations of a well instructed clergy, and the other advantages to which we have referred, the evils resulting from the wretched condition of



the common schools, may in part be obviated, and intelligent men be produced, not in consequence of the existing system, but in spite of that system. One inference, however, may fairly be deduced from this subject, in confirmation of our leading argument, viz. that if the indirect influence of Colleges on the enlightenment of the public mind be thus important, and if, in this country at least, many of the pupils of these seminaries must be drawn from the common schools, the most liberal provision ought to be made for the training of the teachers of these schools, and the best understanding to subsist between them and the heads of colleges.

We are aware that to the proposal of employing colleges for training teachers, various objections will be urged. One class of objectors will deprecate the measure as having a tendency to lower the standard of attainment in colleges, to popularize our Collegiate Institutions, and convert them into mere Academies or Grammar Schools. Such objectors misunderstand our proposal. With the existing regulations of colleges, in regard to the admission of regular students, and their graduation we do not propose to interfere. The standard of attainment is abundantly low, we should rejoice rather, were it practicable, to see it raised. We propose merely that candidates for the office of teacher shall be allowed to prosecute such studies as are common to them with students of the other learned professions, in the ordinary classes, confining their attention to such parts of the course as may be deemed expedient; and that the diploma which they afterwards receive shall be strictly professional, certifying merely their ability to teach. We cannot see how this will, in the slightest degree, interfere with the standard of attainment in colleges. The preparatory information required of the candidate teachers, in the branches which they shall study, may be made the same as in regard to other students, so that there will be no necessity for any change in the mode of instruction. And none will adopt this modified course where circumstances would have enabled them to have taken the whole course.

Another class of objectors urge the painful feeling of inferiority which will depress the candidate teacher, if educated under the same roof with the aspirants to the other learned

professions, the contempt with which they will be treated, and the consequent temptation to abandon the employment. Now in what respect will the condition of the candidate teacher be improved by placing him in a Normal Seminary? He will not, it is true, be brought into collision with other students, but he will lose the opportunity which he would thus enjoy of impressing them with that respect which talents and industry always command. He cannot disguise from himself that the employment which he has chosen is far from being held in the esteem which it merits. He must have counted the cost before he made his choice, and his shrinking from the ridicule of the vain and thoughtless, if exposed to such a trial, would prove him unworthy of the office to which he aspired. In point of fact, however, the objection supposes a state of feeling in the students of colleges which does not exist. At Gettysburgh and in this College, the experiment has already been made, on a small scale, and no such results have followed. The same objection might have been urged against the introduction of manual labour into colleges. Have these results been such as to afford any countenance to this objection? Do not the most respected of our students partially support themselves by manual labour, and has the knowledge of this fact any other tendency than to elevate them in the eyes both of the professors and of their fellow students? What would be the consequences of separating the education of the people from that of the wealthier classes, of establishing Normal Seminaries and Common Schools for the one, and reserving Academies and Colleges for the other, remains to be tried. That it would increase the jealousy with which the latter are already viewed by many as establishments intended chiefly for the sons of the wealthy, appear to me evident. And should the idea ever prevail, that Normal Seminaries are Colleges for the poor, where those whose circumstances preclude them from availing themselves of the higher Seminaries, may acquire such a measure of knowledge as to fit them for teaching the class to which they belong, it appears to me equally evident, that few would be found to enter them as students, even should the people vote the funds necessary for their support.

A third class of objectors, looking at the wide chasm which at present separates the common school from the college, affect to doubt whether those who propose educating teachers in colleges, have ever actually visited the common schools, and triumphantly ask what is to become of the common school system while the candidate teachers are being educated? Now, I know the lamentable state of many of the common schools. I have spent a considerable part of the six months which have elapsed since my arrival in this country in visiting these schools. But of this I am certain, that the standard of attainments is not lower than must have been that of the schools of Scotland, at the period of the introduction of the parochial system into that country; and yet the founders of that system, looking to the colleges to furnish teachers for the schools, established a high standard of qualification for the parochial teachers, and experience confirmed the wisdom of their decision. To elevate the standard of education in a country, you must aim high. Actual performance will always fall below the original conception, and unless allowance is made for the gravitating tendency, the result will be a miserable failure. Above all, those who legislate for this country should cherish a boundless confidence in the energies of its people. Whatever others have done, such a people may do. Let the experiment only be made. Let but half the energy which has been put forth in the internal improvement of the State be applied to the subject of education, and the low condition of the common schools will cease to be matter of reproach; the chasm which separates the lower from the higher seminaries will be filled up, and the communication between mind and mind be as much facilitated as has recently that between city and city. Pennsylvania will take her place in the educational, as she has already done in the political scale, and rival New England in the relative proportion of her literary men, as she already does New York, in agriculture and commerce. There is no want of the raw material amongst us, no deficiency of native talent. Manu-factories only are wanted to fit it for use. In regard to the improvement of the existing race of teachers, to whom the working of the common school system must be entrusted



until others are educated, the same difficulty will be felt, whether we have recourse to Normal seminaries or to colleges. The simplest expedient appears to be to insist on the attendance of the present teachers for a limited period in the model schools, during the season when the common schools are vacant, as has recently been done by the Irish board of education ; but to regard this merely as a temporary expedient, to prosecute energetically the work of preparing thoroughly qualified teachers. The temporary nature of the engagement of teachers in this country, injurious in other respects, will afford great facility in introducing improved modes of teaching. When the Prussian system was introduced into France, the government were under the necessity, in many instances, of continuing teachers in office of whom they did not approve, because, having been appointed during life or good behaviour, they could not be removed ; and many years will in consequence elapse before the improved method obtain a fair trial. But in this country, no such necessity exists. The good teachers, and there are many such, even now will be retained. The inefficient will gradually give place to others, trained in the preparatory seminaries.

A fourth and more powerful objection is drawn from a source to which we have already alluded, the numerous openings to cultivated talent which this country presents. Educate young men in the manner you propose, says the objector, and you cannot retain them as teachers. They would speedily abandon an irksome and ill regulated employment, for one more congenial to their feelings. This objection applies equally to educating in Normal seminaries as in colleges, and is only to be met by increasing the emolument of teachers ; attaching to the office, as in Scotland and in Prussia, a respectable dwelling house with a portion of land, and elevating the standing of the teacher by the various means referred to in a former part of this discourse. On the plan which we have suggested, the State would in the meantime secure, at least for the stipulated period, the services of efficient teachers, men of cultivated minds, trained to the art, and in the vigour of life, whose exertions would raise the style of teaching, and increase the emoluments and respectability of the office.



Should such men, after serving the three years required to cancel their bonds, enter on other employments ; should they return to college, and after completing their studies follow out any of the learned professions, their success would stimulate others to follow their example. Their pupils would tread in their footsteps. Talent would be called from obscurity, and public encouragement, thus judiciously applied, would cause a continually ascending current in society, as subterranean heat agitates the waters of the ocean. The effect of the examples and labours of such men on society during the period of their engagement would more than repay the state for the advances made to them, even should they subsequently abandon the employment ; but as population advances, and the other learned professions fill up, many would be found willing to continue teachers, especially if by having a fixed residence the principle of local attachment were called into exercise, and by an increase of emoluments their minds were raised above the fear of want. May we not hope too that, as juster views of the importance of the office begin to prevail, many will continue in it from the same motives which now animate the Christian Missionary. The services are in many respects similar, the talents requisite in both of the highest order, and we know not whether greater humility and self denial be not necessary to live in obscurity among our countrymen at home, and behold without a sigh, others even our inferiors in attainment, outstripping us in the race of life, than to follow the same self-denying course among the heathen, removed from the scenes of our youth, and surrounded by those with whom we were previously strangers.

After all, it must be conceded that the circumstances in which this objection is founded do present a formidable difficulty to the progress of education in this country. When I reflect, that in Prussia and France the number of candidates for admission to the Normal seminaries always greatly exceed the number of vacancies, although the emoluments of teachers in those countries are far from being considerable ; and when I think on what would be the probable result of opening such establishments here, the difference between the state of society in the two countries forces on me

the conviction that the difficulty must be met in part at least by other means. Female teachers must be extensively employed, and institutions for educating and training them must be established. From what I have seen since I came to this country, I am convinced that the best form of a school is that in which the arrangement of Providence in regard to families is imitated, the principal being a male, and the assistants, females. The sexes thus combined, mutually supply each others deficiencies; the government of the school and the more laborious part of the teaching being devolved on the male, while those departments which require patient assiduity and gentleness and winning kindness, belong more appropriately to the female. Were the State, besides providing for the education of male teachers in colleges, to establish two or more Normal Seminaries for the education of female teachers, conducted on the same principles as has been suggested in regard to males, the preparatory apparatus for the common school system would appear to me complete.

Instead, however, of dwelling longer on objections, or indulging in the digressions to which they lead, I shall proceed to state briefly the circumstances which appear to me to point out Lafayette College as peculiarly fitted for making such an experiment as that which we have proposed.

First, Its locality. And here I refer not to its picturesque beauty, crowning an eminence which commands a view of as fair a landscape as the eye can rest on; the graceful Delaware, mingling its waters with those of the Lehigh, its sloping banks covered with trees of various foilage or waving with luxuriant harvest; the town, stretched on the peninsula below, washed on either side by a river, and encompassed by rocky hills whose precipitous sides are thickly wooded; the bridge connecting the town with the New Jersey side, and spanning with its light and graceful arches the broad stream which flows beneath; the valley of the Delaware beyond, studded with villages and farm houses, and richly cultivated; the wooded hills on either side with the interjacent country; and the distant mountains shutting in the view, and varying with every change of the hour and season. And yet I am not one

of those who regard the influence of external nature as unimportant in the formation of mind. With the benevolent founder of Hofwyl, I should wish the eye of my pupil in his intervals of relaxation to rest continually on the beautiful or the grand in nature, that his heart may be softened and his intellectual powers expanded by the contemplation. But by the advantages of its locality I understand the isolated position of Lafayette College, close to a town sufficiently large to furnish pupils for a model school, and yet so completely separated from it as to preserve the student from the temptations to which the vicinity, even of moderate sized towns, expose him; the salubrity of the air and climate, and the facilities which its students enjoy for healthful exercise.

Second, The circumstance of its being a Manual Labour College. With the views of the Manual Labour system so eloquently expounded by the President of this College, in an Essay published in the Education Annual for 1835, I fully coincide. That system appears to me admirably adapted to all classes of the community. I should rejoice to see it every where introduced. But if there be one purpose to which it is more immediately applicable than another, it is to the training of teachers for the common school. The diminution of expense is its least recommendation, though this also is a consideration not to be despised. The security which it affords that the teacher shall possess vigorous bodily health, a condition indispensable to the right performance of his laborious duties, and the absence of which no other qualification can compensate; the habits of order and punctuality and patient industry which it forms or strengthens; and the just appreciation of the value of time to which it leads, are all powerful arguments in its favour. When to this is added the consideration, that the teacher will in this way be instructed in branches of industry, which may be made available in part at least to his future support, while he is taught to despise the unjust prejudice originating in days of feudal barbarism, and perpetuated in a portion of the country by the prevalence of slavery, which connects manual labour with degradation, the arguments in favour of the system will appear complete.



Third, The high tone of moral and religious sentiment which pervades the pupils of this establishment. I trust that my motives in making this statement will not be misunderstood. I have had but little opportunity of becoming acquainted with the students of other colleges in this country, and have no intention whatever to institute invidious comparisons. I state merely the impression produced on my own mind by what I have witnessed—an impression which powerfully contributed to fix my purpose of remaining here, and I state it because it is necessary to my argument.

“As regards moral education,” says Guizot, minister of public instruction, in a circular addressed to the teachers of France, “it is in you above all that I confide. You are not ignorant that this is without doubt the most important and most difficult part of your mission. You are not ignorant, that in committing a child to your care, every family demands that you shall make him an honest man, the State, a good citizen. You are aware that virtue does not always accompany intelligence, and that the lessons which childhood receives may become fatally injurious if they are addressed only to the understanding. Let the teacher not fear then to encroach on the rights of families, in devoting his chief attention to the inward cultivation of the souls of his pupils. Whilst he ought to guard against admitting into his school the spirit of sect or of party, and imbuing the minds of children with opinions in politics or religion, which place them, so to speak, in revolt against the authority of the domestic council, he ought to rise above the transitory disputes which embroil society; to apply himself incessantly to propagate and strengthen those imperishable principles of morality and of religion, without which the universal order is in danger; and to cast deeply into the youthful heart, those seeds of virtue and of honour which age and passions shall never destroy. Faith in Providence, the sacredness of duty and submission to paternal authority, the respect due to the laws, to the prince, to the rights of all, such are the sentiments which he will labour to develope.”

Coinciding in the views thus eloquently expressed, of the duties intrusted to the teacher, I consider it of the highest



importance that the moral atmosphere which he breathes should be pure and invigorating; that from the example of those around him, he should not only have nothing to fear, but much to learn; and that his associates should be characterized by humility and sober-mindedness, and that charity which suffereth long and is kind; and such associates, if I have judged aright, he would find here.

Fourth, The circumstance of Lafayette College belonging peculiarly to no religious sect or party. This is expressly stated in the charter of the Institution, and has been uniformly acted on in the appointment of its professors. On this particular, however, I shall not enlarge.

I have thus completed the view which I purposed to give of the important question to which I have directed your attention. For my own conviction of its importance, you will give me credit, when I state to you that the hope of being instrumental in the advancement of education in America, particularly in the improvement of common schools, was my principal motive for relinquishing a lucrative situation at home, and becoming an emigrant in a foreign land. I was not, indeed, ignorant that the people of America are alive to the important bearing which education has on their institutions, and that amongst them are to be reckoned some of the most zealous friends of education, as well as some of the most skilful instructors of youth, and I had not therefore the vanity to suppose that the presence of an obscure stranger could materially advance the cause; but I felt that results belong to God, that the circumstances of my past life had fitted me in some measure for being useful here, and that whether successful to the full extent of my wishes or not, I should be happier labouring in this department than in any other. In the President of this College I found one who can appreciate my motives, who has himself long and successfully laboured in this cause, with a disinterestedness and a zeal which I shall rejoice to imitate. Whether supported by the State or not, we purpose to open a Model School, in connexion with the College, for the important purposes which I have described; and the superintendence of this school, as well as the instruction of such candidate Teachers as may present themselves, I shall

cheerfully undertake. That the countenance of the State, particularly as furnishing the means of supporting young men during their studies, is highly desirable, we readily admit. But confident that this aid will, if necessary, be extended, either by the State or by the private friends of education, we shall go forward, and endeavour to establish by facts, what no reasoning can so clearly demonstrate, the importance of a regular system of training to the formation of efficient teachers.

One word to my young friends before me, and I have done. In the opening of this discourse I hinted at the intense interest with which the important experiment in civil and ecclesiastical government now making in this country, is viewed by the friends of civil and religious liberty throughout the world. I stated then, and I repeat it now, that the success of the experiment depends essentially on the enlightenment of the people of this country. What a motive to industry, in the prosecution of your studies, to zealous, persevering application to those pursuits which are to fit you hereafter for taking a share in guiding public sentiment does this consideration suggest? Yes! if the torch of liberty, transmitted from Greece to Rome, from Rome to the barbarous nations of the north, quenched for a time in the night of the middle ages, rekindled on the shores of Britain, transmitted thence to her offspring in the west, and now burning with a clear and steady light, if this torch is extinguished in your hands when shall it be rekindled anew. The despot who now trembles at the slightest allusion to the government of your free and happy country, will exultingly point to it as the grave of freedom, and the philanthropist will mourn in secret on her blighted hopes. If, in the language of the poet, when Poland was blotted from the list of nations, and her struggle for independence had terminated in the destruction of her bravest sons,

“ Hope for a season bade the world farewell  
And freedom shrieked as Kosciusko fell.”

What feelings, think you, will agitate the bosom of every lover of his species, should the land of Washington pass through anarchy to despotism? Should the ark of freedom, intrusted to the guardianship of a people debased by igno-

rance, fall through their neglect into the hands of its foes? And if such be the emotions with which the mere worldly politician would contemplate the overthrow of your civil and religious polity, what think you would be those of the friend of religious truth. He knows, indeed, that the principles for which he contends are indestructible, that they must survive all changes and vicissitudes ; yet the feelings with which the Christian traveller views Laodicea, and Ephesus, and Sardis, afford but a faint impression of those which would overwhelm the mind of him who stood amidst the ruins of the churches of this country, and wept over their desolation. Remember then that the destinies of humanity are apparently in the hands of your country, and quit yourselves like men to whom interests so momentous have been committed.

THE END.

